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Some of the Best Illinois High School Prose of 1950

Selected by J. N. Hook
University of Illinois

FOREWORD

I have just finished reading and rereading about 120,000 words of prose written during 1950 by Illinois high school students. Much of this prose shows a deep concern with the national and international issues that plague us. Some of it ignores the broader issues and concerns itself with the local, the personal. There are undertones of seriousness in even that prose which is superficially flippant. Our young people are thinking—thinking as hard and straight as they can—about the problems of today and of all times.

Often the quality of the writing is excellent. True, there are clichés and occasional ineptitudes of phrase, but there is also freshness, sometimes even vividness, and there is constant evidence of logical organization and mechanical accuracy. I regret that space permits the publication of only about a tenth of the selections that were submitted.

Please start collecting now the prose for next year's issue. When you submit it, be sure to enclose the author's name (printed legibly), school, year of graduation, and your name. Enclose first-class postage if you want any manuscript returned.

Additional copies of this issue are available at twenty cents each in lots of ten or more. Single copies are twenty-five cents.

J. N. H.

Contribution to Posterity

"Very good, very funny," nodded McDoogle, handing back my latest creative masterpiece. "As your advising fairy, Lail, I give this story my stamp of approval." He brushed a speck of dirt from his gossamer wing and continued, "However . . ."

"However?" I prompted. "However what?"

"I don't mean to criticize," began McDoogle, "but it seems to me that you ought to write at least one really serious poem—something that future generations can read and then say, 'Here is something that will never die.' You owe it to posterity."

"But I can't write serious poetry," I protested. "It's too hard."

"You owe it to posterity," my fairy adviser repeated firmly. He helped himself to a chocolate cream. "Now get to work."

"Maybe it wouldn't be a bad idea to write something serious for once," I mused. "Oh, well, we shall see what we shall see." I put a sheet of paper into the typewriter and stared at it. McDoogle perched on my shoulder and stared at me. After five minutes of silent contemplation, he spoke.

"Why not try 'My throbbing soul'?" he suggested. "Just for a starter."

"That does sound impressive," I agreed, and put it down. "What next?"

"How about 'My throbbing soul grows sick for love of thee'?" offered my fairy helpfully.

"Wonderful," I approved, and I typed the line. "How's this: 'My throbbing soul grows sick for love of thee, Pip, pip, old chap, let's have a spot of tea'?"

"Um-m-m, that's very nice," said McDoogle thoughtfully, "but—no! We'd better stick to stark tragedy."

"Stark tragedy," I repeated. "All right, then. What about 'The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees'?"

"That's fine," agreed McDoogle, "except that it's already been published as part of 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes. Try something else."

"How about 'My anguished heart is twisted by your icy scorn'?" I suggested hopefully. "Do you think that's stark enough?"

"Well, yes . . . and no," McDoogle pondered. "Mostly no. Why don't you try philosophy? The beauty of nature?"

"The beauty of nature," I repeated thoughtfully. "Let's try this, 'Ah, how I love to take a walk so early in the morn, With

dew so glist'ning pearly on the rose and on the thorn; I love to watch the spider spin his tiny shim'ring thread,—' ”

“Go on,” prompted McDoogle. “It sounds fine.”

“‘But just 'tween you and me, old sport, I'd rather stay in bed.’ ”

McDoogle took his third chocolate cream and nibbled it reflectively. “Um-m-m, no,” he said at last. “Try something else. How about stars?”

“Let's see,” I pondered. “A million tiny pin points against a velvet sky. How brilliantly they sparkle! Oh, me! Oh, me! Oh, my!”

McDoogle licked the last of his fifth chocolate cream from his fingers and shook his head. “It won't do,” he announced. “Try stark tragedy again.” He glanced at his fairy watch. “My time's up,” he said, reaching for another cream. “You work on that poem, and when I come back, I expect it to be done. And no funny business. Stark, stark tragedy all the way through. Remember, you owe it to posterity.” My fairy adviser picked up his ink pad and the stamp of approval and flew out the window, leaving me alone with my throbbing soul and anguished heart.

But wait! What about this: “Life is no joy; 'tis sorrow and despair. . . .”

LAIL LEWIS, Thornton Twp. H. S., Harvey, '52
Adele Fredrickson, sponsor

Digging for Treasure

Dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference works are interesting reading, they say. Do you believe it? Ah, yes, you, too can have fun with those thick and heavy volumes as I did! Yet you are likely to be dissatisfied if you only try to skim the surface. Really, that will not do. It is necessary to get to the roots if you expect good results! If you come across an item or a definition that makes you curious, investigate, consult other references and sources of information.

Let me show you how it works. In Webster I found that an ASSASSIN is one who slays treacherously or by covert assault; one who kills, or attempts to kill, secretly as the agent of another or others, or for reward; formerly, one of a band of Syrian fanatics.

I found this very interesting, so I dipped into an encyclopedia and read further about the ill-famed Hashashins, or Assassins, as they are now usually called.

It seems they belonged to a certain Mohammedan sect, an offshoot of the Ismaili branch which at the present time is headed by Aga Khan III, the father-in-law of Rita Hayworth. The beginning of their history dates back to 1090 A.D. when Hasan-ibn-al-Sabbah, a powerful leader of the Ismailis, fled from Cairo to the mountains of Persia. After gathering his supporters and building a castle in the mountains, he established a secret order which had as one of its tenets the secret murder of all its enemies. Their religion was a mixture of Christian, Jewish, Mohammedan, and Magi dogmas while the principal article of their belief was that the Holy Ghost was embodied in their chief.

By preaching that his orders proceeded from Deity, the sheik actually made his devotees fanatical slaves. The work of murder he had planned was always carried out successfully because, in order to insure the unquestioning obedience of the disciples, he set them on to smoke or chew hashish (dried hemp flowers) which produces extreme cerebral excitement. Hence their name: Hashashins—hashish eaters.

Thus the Assassins, at the height of their power numbering only 50,000, held Asia Minor, Persia, and numerous other lands in terror for over a century. The descendants of the sect still live in parts of India, Syria, and Iran and are said to be devout and proud of their "glorious" history.

ART ZAILSKAS, Morton H. S., Cicero, '51
Grace Gaarder, teacher

December 7, 1941

Though I was only seven years old at the time, December 7, 1941, is a date that will live forever in my memory. We were living in Vallejo, California, a town across the bay from San Francisco, and my father was a supervisor at the great Mare Island Navy Yard.

It was a lazy, hot Sunday morning, and my brother, Colin, and I were playing with a baseball in the front yard. Through the front door, which was open to admit the cool breeze from off the bay, we could hear on the radio "The Chicago Round Table of the Air," which, ironically enough, was discussing diplomatic relations with Japan. Suddenly Mr. Edwards, our neighbor, came out and hurried through our front door. We could hear his radio, too, but it had something else on, something with lots of noise and static. Presently our radio, also, was tuned to this strange program. Curi-

ous, Colin and I came to stand in the doorway and listen. Through the static and the queer zoomings and roarings that weren't static, a voice was describing a strange, terrible scene. It spoke of airplanes and bombs, smoke, ships sinking, and people dying. Frequently the name "Japan" was mentioned. Colin and I were fascinated. This was more exciting than "The Lone Ranger." But why were the grown-ups looking so serious? Their brows were furled in anxiety, and Mr. Edwards was talking about "Orson Welles" and "another hoax." An announcer interrupted to explain that their newsroom had picked up this broadcast by a "ham" or amateur radio operator in the Philippine Islands, that it had not been confirmed, but that they would continue bringing it to us. . . . Bored, Colin and I went back to our game.

That was a strange day. Even to me, a child, it seemed like a dream. To the grown-ups it must have been a nightmare. People clustered around radios or stood in yards, talking in subdued tones. It was Mrs. Booth down the block who first explained to me that we had been attacked, that the United States was, or soon would be, at war. That was very interesting, but could Gordon come out to play? Then came the first blow. Peggy and Kenneth Means were moving. Mr. Means was staying at his job on Mare Island, but the rest of the family were returning to Wyoming. Peggy explained that they "weren't staying to get bombed." Mare Island was an important Navy base, and Mr. Means felt his family would be safer away from such a strategic target.

The sun was setting as I hurried homeward, and I had to wait ten minutes to cross Gardner Street. It took that long for the procession of army trucks on their way to the Praesidio in San Francisco to pass. Glancing up, I saw a strange zeppelin-like balloon rising from a vacant lot. I was told it was a barrage balloon used against enemy planes in case of an air attack. There were machine guns set up in the vacant lot, too.

We had a cold meal that night. No one had been away from the radio long enough to prepare dinner. The worry and tension in the air affected even Colin and me. Just before bedtime we drew my mother aside to seek information. The Means family had said they were moving to avoid "bombing," a still unfamiliar term. Were we moving too? No she said, we weren't. Why not, we wanted to know. In reply she told us the fable of "Appointment in Samarra," concerning a man who, attempting to escape from danger, ran straight into it. The roads would be needed for transportation of men and supplies vital for the war effort. Gas would be low. All things considered, it was better to stay. We under-

stood these things and climbed into bed comforted. Overhead the roar of airplanes flying south filled the sky.

I remember this vaguely, for I was thinking of something far more important. We were going Christmas shopping the next day, and Colin and I enjoyed riding on escalators.

ANTHONY ESLER, Glenbard Twp. H. S., Glen Ellyn, '52
Grace Carlson, teacher

Review of *Hiroshima*

President Truman announces that the A-bombing of Korea is under consideration. Everywhere discussion—senseless and brilliant—concerns the use of the great weapon. Would Russia retaliate? Is it morally and ethically allowable?

To discuss this subject intelligently one should have as an integral part of his background the reading of John Hersey's *Hiroshima*, termed by many the greatest piece of reporting of this century, if not of all time.

Hiroshima begins at 8:15 on the morning of August 6, 1945, when the atomic bomb is dropped by a lone B-29 upon Hiroshima, Japan.

"The morning was still; the place was cool and pleasant. Then a tremendous flash of light cut across the sky. Mr. Tanimoto has a distinct recollection that it travelled from east to west, from the city toward the hills. It seemed a sheet of sun."

Mr. Tanimoto, a Methodist pastor, is one of the six individuals chosen by Hersey to document the historical horror. Taking each person and relating his experiences during and after the attack, Hersey tells only facts and details. He lets the reader interpret. The deepest characteristics in men are revealed without explanation. When the reader is through, he knows the effect *upon people* of an atomic bomb attack.

The 118-page masterpiece is organized into just four chapters. In the first, the noiseless flash that killed 78,150 is described as seen and understood by those who lived through it.

To one it was, "Mother, help me!" To another it was "a brilliant . . . a terrible ripping noise." To a Christian housekeeper, "Our Lord Jesus, have pity on us!"

Fire and confusion and death written in concise, unemotional detail make up the next chapter. With no place to go, no one to turn to, the people of Hiroshima took on an attitude that underlay

their feeling throughout the entire disaster—bewilderment. They still did not even know what had caused the explosion.

When Mr. Tanimoto met his wife “by incredible luck” many hours after the bomb had been dropped, he was “so emotionally worn out . . . he simply said, ‘Oh, you are safe.’” After they told each other where they had been, “Mr. Tanimoto said he wanted to see his church. . . . They parted as casually—as bewildered—as they had met.”

Hersey with cryptic style describes the burns and blood and bodies of the victims. Still no help came from other Japanese cities. Only the lightly wounded could be treated. The doctors felt there was no hope for the heavily wounded. “The first task is to help as many as possible—to save as many lives as possible.”

Then there was the radiation sickness causing many new deaths a month after the explosion. Scientists tested for radioactivity. The American occupying force arrived. The survivors silently and tediously returned to their homes—if they remained—or began to repair what was left.

Hersey does not ask questions. Hersey does not answer questions. Hersey merely gives the world something to think about.

COLEMAN BROWN, Evanston Twp. H. S.
Clarence Hach, teacher

Good Will to Men

A hill like a hundred other hills. A stable, dilapidated and hardly deserving of the name. A child in the stable, asleep on the straw.

Looks like the same picture that appears annually on fifty per cent of your Christmas cards, doesn't it? Hill, stable, and nativity scene, complete. Why then is the sky so dark? Where is the light from the great star? Where is the star itself?

No—this is no Christmas card picture. Few people would have the courage to send this scene to their friends. It takes courage to rouse oneself from the famous American state of comfortable oblivion to face the realities of a war.

You see, you should have known that this “lost land” was a result of the last war. The ruins heaped beside the doomed shack should have told you that. The utter screaming stillness, a far cry from the heralding angels, should have warned you.

Who then, you ask, is the child? Why does he sleep so soundly

on the straw? Is he too young to realize what horrors lie around him?

He is young, but he is older than you or I. He has been alive only eight years, but he has lived a hundred. He has no family, but he has thousands of brothers and sisters, each one just like him. He doesn't sleep, he dreams. Soon he will wake, shivering, crying out to shatter the dark visions that make sleep worse than the gnawing hunger that preys on him during the day.

Now do you know who he is? Do you recognize his brothers and sisters, a people who in substance are nothing but a broken heart—the price of the last war.

Now put them on a Christmas card. Send it to all your friends. Americans have hearts. They merely forget to use them.

If, in every shell of a human being wrecked by the last war we see the infant Christ, we will have our chance to bring gifts—myrrh, frankincense, gold. But then, think—what would be worth more than the gaudy gifts of kings to these people? Give them what they need.

Give them clothing, food, and tools, wrapped in humanity and hung on their Christmas tree. Give them friendship and brotherhood. Give them joy and peace. Give them the comforts you have.

Give them life.

CATHERINE WILSON, Lyons Twp. H. S., LaGrange
Kay Keefe, teacher

A Fighting Idea

The sole effective answer to the threat of the hydrogen bomb has existed from the dawn of man's conscience. The great ethical and religious expressions which bear its message in all faiths and generations call it by many names. We know it as human brotherhood.

Although it is the answer to the hydrogen bomb, a work of technology, human brotherhood is not the product of a laboratory or a factory. It cannot be rained on an enemy from airplanes or shot at him from guns. Since it is an idea, it can fight only other ideas, not men.

A fighting idea is an idea lived and believed in by men. Brotherhood can fight the ideas of race hatred, class distinction, and war only as effectively as it is lived by men—by the rulers and peoples of all the nations of the world, by our fathers and mothers, by *us* as today's students and tomorrow's world citizens.

In living brotherhood we must remember its practice in every department of our lives and thinking. It is a mockery and betrayal of the idea of brotherhood to be filled with charity for the people of Africa or Israel while we are filled with contempt for the Negro or Jew who sits next to us in the classroom. Conversely, we must recognize the futility of holding love and trust only for those within the boundaries of Evanston, Illinois, or the USA.

Most scientists and politicians today offer the speeding-up of the armaments race as the only way to peace. We reject this "solution" as fatally immoral in the clear light of man's duty to man.

In building our world of tomorrow, we place our whole faith in human brotherhood, translated by our efforts into a functioning, sovereign world government.

This is our answer—the only answer—to the hydrogen bomb.

JOHN PURNELL, Evanston Twp. H. S.
Clarence Hach, teacher

2075 A. D.

The chill evening wind blows the dead leaves down the ruined streets. Small windy gusts catch up scraps of yellowed paper and fling them high into the air. Fitful breezes play hide-and-seek among the shattered and darkly twisted buildings. The only sound is the never ending howl of the wind. Here and there solitary, crumbling structures raise broken limbs heavenward in remorseful supplication.

No living thing roams the dusty, torn streets, for the Last War has come and gone; the atom and the hydrogen bombs have done their work all too well. The greatest part of the radioactivity of the bombs has now dispersed, and no life whatsoever remains. In some of the buildings charred, yellowed bones are the grisly reminder of human beings lost in the dust of antiquity.

The Earth, like the other planets—barren—dead, is circling, circling around the sun, which strokes the planet Earth with her warm beams as if trying to bring forth life from the empty barrenness.

Suddenly the air on Earth is charged with an uneasy expectancy. The wind feels the eerie calm and becomes still. Far, far away in the cold, infinite blackness of outer space, a luminous speck, perhaps from another galaxy, approaches the Earth's tiny solar system.

The speck grows larger and looks like a meteorite winging towards the dead planet. Shortly, a dazzling projectile swings above the waiting Earth. It whines through the upper stratosphere and glows cherry-red as it nears the Earth. With a soft sigh it slides to a resting place in the night of the planet. The heavy, oppressive silence is unbroken save for the soft whispering of the wind as it cools the red-hot covering of the projectile. The Earth rotates on her axis, and night slowly passes into day and day again into night while the projectile covering changes from a cherry-red to a deep icy blue.

Day breaks for a second time, and a hissing rips upon the air as a panel on the projectile rolls back revealing an opening. Pale, golden hands grasp the edges of the opening, and a man-like figure emerges. By the standards of the forgotten inhabitants of the planet, the figure would be termed an Alien.

The golden Alien manipulates several odd devices with his deft, six-fingered hand. In a few hours, after gathering samples of the soil, the stranger returns to his projectile, and with a Titan roar the ship ascends into the outer void.

Out in space the Alien sits before a strange radio-like device. He reports the weirdly destroyed buildings, the ruin and stark desolation found upon the dead planet, all of which will scarcely be understood, for only madness could have caused such tragedy, and in truth no Alien has ever been mad.

The projectile dwindles quickly, leaving a nebulous trail behind it, while back on Earth, the lost wind rushes again over the eldritch silence and terrible desolation.

MARY PAT HUNTLEY, East H. S., Rockford, '52
Edna Youngquist, teacher

I Speak for Democracy

I speak for democracy. That sounds rather big, doesn't it? You're right; it is big—big enough to fight a war for, big enough for a high school senior to take a little time away from the football games, Saturday-night movies, and even his homework, just to think about it—this word, *democracy*, and what it's going to mean in his life and the lives of those he loves.

To me, democracy means all the things that America stands for. It is reading accounts of starvation, poverty, and ignorance in other countries, and then taking a walk in my own town and smelling dinners cooking in kitchens equipped with modern con-

veniences; it is seeing rich, fertile fields of corn and wheat edged with orchards that stand up and shout that there is plenty for all; it is shopping for attractive, well-made clothes with money I earned working at the job of my choice; it is creating, with the help of a God I can worship in the way I choose, whatever kind of life I want for myself. It is loving and building a home with the person I want to spend the rest of my life with; it is being able to sit next to the President of the United States at a baseball game, knowing I don't have to root for his team if I don't want to.

But then, this democracy I'm speaking about isn't just *having*; it's sharing all this goodness with people who aren't quite so fortunate, quite so warm and healthy and happy as we in America. Democracy, to me, is the European Recovery Program, the CARE packages at Christmas, the seeds for the Philippines, and all the other acts of kindness and friendship that make a national democracy take just one more step towards world democracy. This democracy is loving and respecting the dignity of the individual enough to want to work to give everyone what you and I received as a birth right, by being born in America. It is shoving aside the suspicion and selfishness that is prejudice and offering our strength to weaker people of all races, religions, and creeds—seeing to it that the little fellow doesn't get trampled in the battle of "isms."

My democracy, then, isn't just a Constitution, a Declaration of Independence, or a Bill of Rights—it is a way of life for everybody, and, more than that, it is a serious responsibility. I guess, more than anything else, my democracy is the Golden Rule—the same Golden Rule we all learned in Sunday School: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." That one sentence somehow puts into a nutshell everything I've been trying to say, as one of a generation that's going to be responsible for taking democracy another step ahead—or backward—and soon. It's very important that all of us, especially every young person, take just a little time out each day to stop and think just what has made our daily life what it is. Someone has said that my generation will have to be the best one the world has ever seen, or it will be the last. With a government, a way of life based upon the Golden Rule—I don't see how we can miss being the best. Without a growing, living, working democracy in America and in the world, I don't see how we can miss being the last. We, as products of the best governmental system on earth, shall have to make that choice. I know that it will be the right one, for a country whose theme song is "God Bless America" just can't go wrong. Let's all, with God's help, *really*

"stand beside her and guide her," with strength and sincerity, for only then will a living brotherhood be born.

And you know, that word *brotherhood* is the one I've been looking for all along, because that, above all, is what democracy means to me.

PAULA GIBBS, Maine Twp. H. S., Park Ridge, '51
Paulene M. Yates, teacher

A Master's Duty

Have you ever had a puppy?

Do you know how much a person can become attached to it?

Believe me, I certainly do! It wasn't long ago, in fact, about four months ago, I got myself a little bulldog pup. It was so darn homely that you couldn't help loving it. It was small and soft and warm. You should have seen when it tried to walk; its little legs would bend a little and then it would topple over.

They certainly are clumsy, especially this one! He would trip over anything in his way and most of the time his own feet. He would then sit there with his little head cocked to one side and one ear standing upright with the tip drooping over, staring at any moving or conspicuous object in the room.

All the kids in the neighborhood soon became attached to him. They soon loved him as if he were their own.

But the sad day soon came! I had just let him out to rumpus in the backyard for a while and returned to my work, when all of a sudden I heard soft whimpering out in back. I ran to the back door and there he was lying near the curb. I raced over to him as rapidly as I could. It was a broken back! I just stood there shocked almost to death; it was almost like losing your arm. I got a board and slid him on it rather than just pick him up.

I knew what I had to do as soon as I found him lying there. I had to put him out of his misery as quickly as possible. I had to shoot my own dog! I took him to the basement. I went upstairs to get my gun. I was weary from shock and my reflexes had almost completely stopped. I found my gun in my closet and I wearily placed a shell in the chamber and started my struggle back to the death chamber.

I gave the pup a last hug and he placed his little wet nose against my cheek. I then stepped back to get it over with, and believe me it wasn't easy! There were tears in my eyes as I backed away from that helpless little fella and I could hardly see.

The pup looked at me and tried to lift his head, but could not succeed in doing so. I believe he knew what I was going to do because his shiny little eyes seemed to say, "Go ahead, I understand." I drew closer to his helpless body and closed my eyes and pulled the trigger. There was a loud "Crack." It was all over and I had just put my best friend to death.

He's now sleeping peacefully and I know I am forgiven.

LEONARD TWOMBLY, DeKalb Twp. H. S., '51

Who Knows What Evil Lurks . . .

I had finished my homework and was feeling rather venturesome, or I would have stayed at home that night where I belonged. But instead I unwisely trailed along to see the family clan and to discover whether I could still handle the troop of cousins. As I stepped through the door, I was greeted with, "You're just in time. We're gonna play cowboys and Indians, and you can be the Indians."

"How many Indians?" I demanded.

"Oh, a thousand or so," was the reply, and before I could find strong enough words with which to protest, a bow and some twig arrows were thrust into my hands, and I was ignominiously hauled out into the black treacherous night to be transformed into a thousand evil Indians. Two seconds later I was sprinting up the driveway, the bow jabbing my leg at every step, with a screeching posse of bold cowpunchers churning up the gravel behind. Wild shouts of, "After the varmints; let's get those low-down killers," and other such TV-movie language floated to my shocked ears as I rounded a corner and neatly stepped inside the garage. With guns and voices blazing, my pursuers reined in their sweating horses and paused to reconnoiter.

"We've got 'em trapped, boys. Let's go get 'em!"

There followed a brief argument. No one wanted to come to get me. I apparently had quite a reputation. Grinning smugly, I sprawled upon the beaten running board of Grandpa's car and prepared to make camp. But as I always say, you can't keep a good cousin down. An artificial silence reigned outside and I, curious as always, peered out the door. Nothing moved. Fitting a twig to my bow, I shot it sideways into the grape arbor, and a smothered "Ouch" escaped from the lips of an unseen foe. Slipping warily from the canyon, I took one step forward, and I've been sorry ever

since. A small but husky Hopalong Cassidy leaped from the apple tree onto my back and dug his spurs into my ribs.

"Be careful now; let's not get too rough," said I, as we both landed in a pile of rotten apples.

"Bring the rope, and we can burn 'em at the stake," shouted my antagonist. It was then that I raised my voice in protest. "Only Indians burn people. Posses . . ." I stopped just in time. I had almost said, "Posses hang people," and that might have caused serious consequences. I was comfortably tied to the clothes pole and the triumphant captors were diligently searching for fuel when suddenly my blessed mother called through the darkness, "We're leaving now."

"Untie me," I gloated. "We're going." My captors released me with reluctance, and I scurried to the car and locked the doors.

"Why did Bobby want matches?" Mom asked absently. "He was asking everyone if he had any."

"Oh, he was just going to—matches? MATCHES! Are you sure he wanted matches?"

Mother was quite sure, and I said no more. But next time, believe me, I'm taking a fire extinguisher, just in case those small-sized broncobusters want me to "play" with them again.

LOIS HEIMSOOTH, Maine Twp. H. S., Park Ridge, '51
Paulene M. Yates, teacher

I Sing My Sad Song

I sing a sad song. And although I no longer have a cause to sing a sad song, I continue to chant its melody. What was once sad has brought me divine revelation and infinite peace. I am immortal. I sing my sad song to all to guide them to comfort and everlasting peace.

I am a star. My home is God's Heaven, my guardian the Keeper of the Stars. I have not always been The Favored One. I have not always shone from this corner of this celestial universe.

I was once a child, a dimly sparkling starlet. I had a mooring in God's Heaven as did all my friends, but we were young and fun-loving then. More than once we were told not to play hide-and-seek among the clouds and never to shine before our Lady Venus gave the sign. But then, we were young, and freedom was delicious.

Time came, of course, when hide-and-seek was no longer fun, and I began thinking of a different form of mischief. Inspiration

came one dusk when we were frisking about waiting for our Lady Venus. I dared the nearest starlet to shine down on Earth before the sign was given . . . and she dared me in return.

I stepped to my place and gleamed a bit. All seemed well. I gleamed a bit more, then sparkled, and finally shone in defiance. Then I felt it happening. The points of my shine had nothing to cling to. In the velvet of the night they could hold, but this slippery dusk was elusive, and I began to slide downward, downward . . . downward.

Night had come when I reached the outer curtain of the forest on Earth. A friendly moonbeam slowed my fall and guided me to a pool in the center of the forest darkness. There I fell—without thinking I fell, shattering the echo of the face of a beautiful angel who was kneeling by its side. She cried when the ripples closed over the last sparkle of her image. It did not return. I had broken her mortal hold on earth.

Her silver tears fell softly to the water breaking its now dark surface with quiet ripples. I shone with all my sparkle and turned the ripples to silver trying to comfort this weeping angel.

Then a moonbeam, Heaven-sent, darted to the water's edge and, cradling the maiden gently, it carried her homeward. And then I knew. This angel was the favorite of the Keeper of the Stars. My misdeeds would doom me to a solitary life on Earth. I was no longer in favor. I was a forgotten star.

That lonely night I sang my sad song over and over again. A gentle Zephyr from Aeolus came to comfort me, and Diana sent a moon-shaft to be my friend, but I could see my stars in Heaven gleaming to me and I only sang my sad song again and again.

Dawn broke. Day came. Dusk slipped away, and another quiet night came stealing from the Keeper of the Stars. Venus shone with all her glory, and other points came glittering forth. I sang my sad song.

Some inquisitive water sprites came to invite me to play in the pool shimmering in the bright moonlight. Mysteriously they danced on the water, an unknown ballet of another world. A golden gleam on the water appeared slowly then—at first hardly seen but ever brightening. The water sprites dissolved in the shadows as soft harp tones began to play my sad song. To the side of the pool appeared a golden angel of coruscating brilliance standing on a shaft of golden angel light. As she came closer the heavens echoed endlessly with the melodies of my sad song.

She was of God . . . a messenger of the Keeper of the Stars. Her mission—to summon me to Heaven to take my place . . . a

new place of honor . . . a chance to prove my worth.

We walked her golden light far from my old home into a distant corner of the velvet of the night. She stopped ; then pointed a beam of light for me to follow the remaining way. I stepped into the hollow softness and took my place.

Again the melody of my sad song echoed through the vastness. Peace suffused me. Comfort enfolded me in her arms. I knew a feeling I had never before imagined. I sang as I sing now, and in the distance I watched three wisemen journeying toward the humble stable upon which I glittered with a new brilliance.

I sing my sad song.

CONNIE SHIELDS, Lake Forest H. S., '51
Robert Haebich, teacher

Variations on a Theme of Priestley

I'm really working now. It is still work because my ideas have not begun to flow fast enough to overcome the chronic fear of having nothing to write. I scratch my scalp vigorously and wish my mother would stop singing along with the radio.

I was working this afternoon, too, when I sat at the piano and listened with that rapture you know when your fingers coax out the delicate harmonies of the masters. I could walk over to the phonograph and hear that same concerto played a thousand times better, but the thrill of producing music would be gone.

I was working last Saturday, when, having several hours to while away between appointments, I prowled the side streets of Chicago in search of a book. It was an adventure: a quest difficult but not impossible. Kind, ageless little men in musty second-hand book stores gave me leads and delighted me with their grotesque pronunciations of Goethe. People I accosted for directions grinned at my dirty face, which had been smudged while browsing among ancient texts in an attic. Frequently I turned the wrong corner, retracing many steps when I discovered my error, so that those strong, eager feet that had begun the search were sore and aching when finally my grimy hands clutched the coveted copy of *Faust*.

I am working when I wait on the lofty platform for the elevated train and watch the quaking aspen leaves tremble in the freshening breeze. I am working when I stand barefoot in the back yard hanging out damp, sweet-smelling clothes on the summer air, and I am still working when, with shirt-sleeves rolled up, I meticulously work them to crisp perfection on the ironing board. I am working

when I stroll down the Midway in the morning sun past Rockefeller Chapel, past Blaine Hall and Harper Library, on my way to a doctor's appointment.

I was working when we stayed after school in the physics lab, pulling out each other's hair and comparing the coarseness with an amazing device that registers hundredths of a millimeter. I am working when I wash the dishes, go to church, empty the garbage, or read a deep book. This being work, thank God; for life would be unbearably dull without it. Indeed, if all these joys are work, what is play?

JOAN HANNAUER, Lyons Twp. H. S., LaGrange, '50
Norma Jordan, teacher

Life Can Be Beautiful

Night was just beginning to close in as the train slowed down for a routine stop at the little village; probably the train was going to pick up some more cars. It was a reasonably good one-point landing, and I picked myself up with great care. Brushing the dust from my ragged suit and battered chapeau, I placed my knapsack under my arm, and, with the catlike tread which comes from eluding dogs, constables, and some unscrupulous fraternity brothers, I proceeded toward my haven.

It was just such nights as these that made me forget the inconveniences of being an adventurer of the road. The soft, pine-scented breeze sent ripples through the lush, green foliage above me, and also cooled my brow as I reclined upon a carpet of spring grass. My stomach was well pleased, having dined on an evening's ration of Mulligan stew and hobo coffee. I rested my head on a mossy rock. In the nearby railroad yard, lights bobbed up and down; an occasional whistle shrilled; and the low, melodious howling of a dog could be heard.

The usual sounds that one expects to find in the woods were a symphony that night. The rustling of the leaves, the chirping of the crickets, and the call of birds, not to mention the moaning of the wind through the rhythmically swaying trees, had nearly lulled me to sleep when that fragrant fresh-pumpkin-pie odor struck my quivering proboscis. Although I had feasted heartily a short time before, my taste buds were already sending to my feverish brain visions of pumpkin loveliness. My stomach was beside itself with joy, which is quite a trick anytime.

Slowly, and with all caution, I crept through the woods to the

nearest farm-house. There, scant yards away, reposed two huge, lovely, wonderful pumpkin tidbits. With a few leaps and bounds, I had secured the oven-warm pies and returned to my lavish suite. There I very daintily devoured both of the spicy bits of art. The pumpkin seemed to flow over my tongue in sweet, tasty waves; and the crust was extraordinary. As a connoisseur of the culinary art I gave silent praise to the angel who made the pies.

Then, with a pieplate for a pillow, I fell asleep while thinking to myself—"You certainly are lucky to have the things you have: nimble feet, deft fingers, and an analytical mind. Ahhhhh. What a life!"

RICHARD KING, Bushnell H. S., '52
Adele Armstrong, teacher

Drama of the Big Top

As I sat underneath the Big Top of Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey's Show, I was caught in the garish spell of the circus. One by one the elephants lumbered by me, followed by galloping steeds, pretty girls, and comical, ridiculous clowns.

Since each of the three rings contained equally fascinating spectacles, I hardly dared to gaze very long at any one sight, but found my eyes darting continually from one act to the other.

Suddenly, there was a roll of drums, and there appeared at the entrance a young man and three girls. They strode into the center ring where a tight wire had been erected. The young man flung off his cape and walked briskly over to a rope, which was drawn at about a forty-degree angle between the ground and the platform of the tight wire. Then to my astonishment, he proceeded to *walk* up this rope to get to the platform. He did not climb up; he did not crawl up; he *walked* slowly up the rope, balancing himself with his outstretched arms. It took him about five minutes to do this, but he finally reached the top.

Then the main part of his act began. He mounted a bicycle from which hung two trapezes. Then, with a girl swinging from each trapeze, and one sitting on his shoulders, he began to cross the tight wire. The Big Top became silent as everyone realized that that young man was holding four lives in his hands as he crossed that tight wire, for there was no life-net below them. The slightest wrong move would send them all toppling many, many feet to the ground. My tension increased as I noticed that the band was now silent; that the attendants who had previously gone

about their business, oblivious to what went on around them, were now concernedly watching the young performers. All eyes were fastened on the daring four. The man would ride precariously for a foot or so, and then stop. His eyes stared constantly ahead of him, and outside of his feet, he moved not a muscle; nor did I, as I sat gazing intently at him. Beneath the tight wire stood a man, staring upward and making various motions with his hands, obviously directing the performers. Then all at once my heart leaped as the bicycle moved a few inches and then seemed to tip dangerously. Its rider wildly see-sawed his pole, as he swayed slightly, trying to regain his balance. The crowd stared in horror. Then I breathed a sigh of relief as the teetering performers once more attained their steadiness. My hands were wet with perspiration after the performers had finally crossed the wire. The man descended by means of walking down the rope.

The band resumed playing; and the attendants went back to their work, again oblivious to their surroundings. The Big Top once more came alive with the glitter and gayety that is typical of a circus.

JEANINE JACOBS, Niles Twp. H. S., '50
Priscilla Baker, teacher

The Weaker Sex

Not that I'm against women, but, tell me, just where is the "weaker sex" of Grandma's day? Ah, those were the days (Grandpa tells me). Women would faint at the sight of a mouse or blush after hearing a naughty story. Nowadays, when told one, they memorize it. But where the real trouble comes in is on a date (or so the fellers tell me). Long ago she might have said something like this, "Oh, Elmer, you're so strong." But not now. Oh no! It's "Leave me alone, Buster, or I'll break your arm." The weaker sex. I tell you, some of these women have got muscles in places that I haven't even got places. And who wears the pants in most of the average American homes? Right. Just let hubby *dare* try to take over. Wham! A flying drop kick. It wouldn't surprise me one bit if instead of a beauty contest for Mrs. America, they start having a weight-lifting contest. Yes sir. The weaker sex is the Vanished American of today.

BILL GOODWIN, Wenona Comm. H. S., '50
Marcia Wright, teacher

The Golden Thread

Throughout the pages of Shakespeare's great tragedy *Macbeth*, there runs a golden thread. This thread symbolizes the deep, continuing love of Macbeth and his wife, Lady Macbeth, for each other.

During the time of the Macbeths' suffering and hardships, never once do these two criticize or blame each other, but instead each suffers for, and tries to comfort the other. Macbeth seldom speaks of his love for his wife, or she for him; yet the reader is conscious of the bond between them which needs few words for expression.

In the opening act of the play, we catch the first glimpse of the golden thread. Lady Macbeth receives a letter from her husband in which he tells her of his meeting with the witches and of all they have prophesied. He is happy to write her this because she will then become a queen. She, in turn, thinks of Macbeth as king. Lady Macbeth realizes that her husband, though brave on the battleground, is too filled with "the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way"; so she steels herself to spur him on to greater things. She plans to persuade Macbeth to help her murder Duncan telling him, "Leave all the rest to me."

In the murder scene, Lady Macbeth cannot summon courage to do the killing herself; so she bids Macbeth commit the deed. When her husband weakens, Lady Macbeth scorns and ridicules him, not because she feels disdain for him, but because she thinks it is for his good. In this scene, her attitude toward him is as toward a child, urging him on, scolding him, and gently taking care of him and leading him away. Although she is afraid, she feels she must be strong for his sake.

The thread continues in act three. Macbeth does not want his wife to know that Banquo is to be murdered. Wanting to shield her from more suffering, he says, "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, 'til thou applaud the deed." In this scene, we also observe the great understanding between these two, as they have both thought that something must be done to try to lessen their suffering.

On runs the thread into scene four of the third act. In this scene, Macbeth is visited by Banquo's ghost at the important banquet at which all the noblemen are present but Macduff and Banquo. Macbeth quails and shouts at the apparition, nearly condemning himself. Lady Macbeth smooths over the trouble as best she can, finally dismissing the guests. Still, she speaks tenderly to him instead of getting angry at his blunders. This is the

last time we see Macbeth and his lady together, yet later when apart, they think of one another.

In the sleepwalking scene, we see the last evidence of Lady Macbeth's love for her husband. While we see her in this scene, there seems to be a feeling of guilt. She feels that, perhaps, if it hadn't been for her, she and her husband wouldn't be suffering so severely. She is sorry that Macbeth has come to be a murderer and tyrant. Even so, while in her demented sleep, she speaks tenderly to him, "Come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone."

In act five, Macbeth shows his concern for his wife's suffering as he talks to the doctor. "Cure her of that. Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased, Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow?"

It would seem the thread is broken when Macbeth hears that his queen is dead. He does not show his sorrow by tears, but says, "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more." The reader feels that it is right that Lady Macbeth was not at his side to see his world tumble about him, and that, with a love as strong as theirs, they are destined to be together even in death.

And so runs the golden thread, weaving a golden tale of love, the only bright spot through the dark pages of two tragic lives.

PAT JOHNSON, Univ. H. S., Normal, '50
Ruth Stroud, teacher

Band Chords and Discords

Carlyle once wrote, "Music is well said to be the speech of angels." I am afraid that Mr. Brix sometimes has a different opinion of our music. At times the band sounds very sour, a jumble of flat notes.

Let us consider how we approach the "Miami Bell-Hop Rag." The clarinets, those aristocrats whose job it is to carry the melody, are dropping out one at a time on the thirty-second notes. The flutes are counting sixty-three measures of rest. If you think that's easy to do while catching up on gossip, just try it sometime! Now a few trumpets come through. The saxophones have just found out they are playing the wrong music.

Mr. Brix stops us by rapping his stick on the music stand. We start anew. This time it seems to go a little better. The trombones and baritones are doing all right. The three bass horns go oompah,

oompah on the down beat. The French horns and mellophones blend the harmony. This is going well!

No. Stop again. What now? The percussion section is caught reading pocket-sized murder stories. There is an awful, uneasy silence. Suddenly, a flute squeaks and everybody giggles.

The music goes on. There is a final blare and the noise stops. Now one saxophone player has found the right place in the right music and confidently blares a loud F sharp into the silence.

Then Mr. Brix, who is one of the angels whom Carlyle mentioned, looks up and says mildly, "Not too bad for the first time."

About then he realizes that the smug-faced clarinets all have their legs crossed at the same silly angle! Some one drops the cymbals with a loud crash. The bell rings for the second hour class.

NANCY EISENBART, Streator H. S., '54
Lucille Tkach, teacher

Money and Man

(Reaction to lines about money in Sandburg's *The People, Yes*)

How many of the evils attributed to money are really caused by money? After all, what is money? Is it the "root of all evil"? Of course not. It is merely symbolic of the inclinations of man. Most simply, it may be defined as human nature in material form. It can accomplish both good and evil, but only in response to man's wishes. We cannot deny that money can unlock many inviting doors, but even without money man would still lie and cheat to gain admittance.

Since it is impossible to isolate and identify all the inner drives that motivate man's behavior, everything is blamed on money, a tangible thing. It is commonly thought that men become corrupt because of money, but it isn't the money that does it; it is the power the money stands for. The poem implies that through money man can both gain and lose his freedom. This would be just as true in a world without money, for a man can be as free as the wind without a cent to his name, or he can have millions and not be as free as a bird in a cage. Therefore, does money run the world? No, of course not. The world runs money. Money is merely the tool whereby greedy man enslaves himself.

JAMES SYKORA, York Comm. H. S., Elmhurst
R. M. Leader, teacher

Fifteen Minutes of Jazz

I hear a mellow trombone solo off in the distance. It is soft, clear, and soothing. The wire brush of the drummer boy is beating out a steady pattern on the hi-hat cymbals. The soft beat of the bass drum and the after-beats of the piano keys keep a steady rhythm. The saxophones take over with a little harmonizing of the trumpets, clarinets, and bass in the background. A hot trumpet player takes off, another one right after him, still another screaming trumpet, until several have played. Each man plays in a key higher than the one before him. The tempo increases greatly and then drops as quickly as it began. As the tempo slows down, the saxes take over. The number one man takes off on a few trick bars; then another player repeats them. The audience begins to shout, "Go! Go! Go! Go!" The two players become tense as their saxes continue to talk with each other. The pace is breathtaking. How can they keep going? What's holding them at it? The crowd goes wild. Someone yells, "Faster, Joe!" The listeners are now tapping their feet and clapping their hands, keeping time with the music. The saxes slowly fade out as the trombone repeats the soft, clear, and mellow solo to end this session of jazz.

PETE CHABUCOS, East H. S., Rockford, '51
Adele Johnson, teacher

A Decision

I have just made a decision. It is one which means the difference between being wanted and belonging for the rest of my high school career, or not being quite so secure, and maybe even left out.

All through junior high school I had heard about an organization of girls which some people call a clique. They had rushing parties and slumber parties and all sorts of things that are fun. I knew that the fun would last all through high school and that if I were asked to belong, I would cherish and remember it forever. It would be fun, that is, for those lucky ones who would be chosen to belong, but sheer misery for those who had thought that perhaps they would be asked to come and join the fun, but who would find themselves left out when the coveted invitations were distributed.

I had sort of known all along that I would be chosen, that they would never overlook me, that, for some reason, they would consider me a great asset to the club and their name.

When the time came, I joined. And these few months I have

been a member, I have certainly had my share of fun and happiness. Also I learned, after I joined, something which many people don't realize—that this club makes many contributions to the community. They help the city by taking baskets of food and clothing to needy families, by standing on street corners on cold and windy days to sell poppies on poppy day, and by supporting the community chest.

I have appreciated being a part of this good work. But amid all this activity and social life, there has been the accusing reminder that I was a part of an undemocratic group, which many people envy and still more people scorn. All the time I was going to the "restricted" parties, I just didn't feel that I was having fun in the right American way. These are the thoughts which have constantly plagued me.

And so I have made my decision. I have turned in my pin and never again will I be a part of their slumber parties and wiener roasts and hayrack rides. It was a big decision and I wished that I didn't have to make it. But I did have to make it and I shall suffer the consequences whether I like them or not. I think I can start doing some bigger things toward a more just world, now that I'm growing up.

JANICE ROBERTS, Bloomington H. S., '53
Maude M. Leonard, teacher

On Acting on Impulses

Day after day, week after week, year after year, people go through life suppressing the things they sometimes impulsively wish they could do. In my opinion this is wrong. I believe that it is harmful to a person's mental state of health to constantly suppress each little desire which comes to one at various times of the day.

I believe that once each year there should be a day set aside for people to carry out their minor impulses. We could call it "Impulse Day" and everyone could do just as he saw fit as long as there would be no great property damage, bodily harm, or lowering of our moral standards.

Is there anyone who at the sight of a high grade on a class paper hasn't felt a sudden impulse to jump out of his seat and give the teacher a big kiss? I know that I have.

Is there anyone who hasn't felt like punching the nose of the kid who butts into line ahead of him? Naturally we have all felt that way at times, but we have suppressed that desire for fear of

being expelled from school for fighting. "Impulse Day" would quickly satisfy that desire.

When people continually talk slowly and in a monotone, doesn't an impulse come to one to grab them and give them a couple of shakes to bring forth a faster flow of conversation?

Is there anyone who, while listening to a boring lecture or speech, hasn't felt like hopping up and breaking the monotony by giving a few of his own brand of jokes?

If while driving a car one sees a little old man or woman step off the curb and start to cross in an accustomed jaywalk without looking to the right or the left, is there ever an impulse to sneak up behind and blast the horn?

I think it would be fun to dive off the gym balcony and swing on the basketball cable structure and walk down the hall singing some song without being looked at as if I were crazy.

It is my opinion that everyone has a certain number of these everyday impulses, and I believe that for one day if these impulses were carried out to a certain extent, there would be a lot fewer people in the world with pentup emotions.

BRUCE BUCK, Maine Twp. H. S., Park Ridge
Anne Lauterbach, teacher

Fourth Passenger

The other two were asleep. I was alone. The wind blew upon my face, warm and relaxing, and the monotonous line in the center of the road went on and on like eternity. Around me, nothingness, broken only by a few stars and that never ending line. The constant blast of wind whipping through the open window felt good and clean, and a peculiar feeling of freedom and power and yet loneliness enfolded me. The speed became faster and faster, then slowly receded. It was about three in the morning, no moon, a few stars, and a lot of empty blackness. It was as if we were but a second in forever. We'd been driving over twenty-four hours, and the other two were now sleeping. I, myself, found it increasingly difficult to keep awake. The incessant drone of the motor and the singsong pattern of stars, the endless road, all entranced me. My eyes grew heavy and an odd vastness and stillness, broken only by the sound of the engine, seemed to hold me in a hypnotic spell. I musn't go to sleep-I-must—Two lights pierced the darkness as a huge truck bore down on me. I swerved.

Somehow I missed and managed to stay on the road. The other two still slept.

I was awake now and sure I could drive another two hours without mishap. I did not think of waking one of the others. In a few minutes, however, I again grew groggy. My head throbbed, and my eyes felt like burning coals. I tried closing them one at a time, but I only became sleepier. I glanced at the clock. It was four. Another hour and it would be one of their turns. Only one more hour. Oh, my eyes—I closed both just for a second. The burning stopped, and my head no longer ached. I slept.

A blinding light awoke me in time to see the huge buttress of a bridge loom before me. Another split second and I would have smashed into a solid concrete wall. I looked back for the car or truck whose light had awakened me, but there was nothing, just a never ending, unbroken road through the middle of a vast barren plain. The time was now four twenty-five, some twenty minutes, at least, since I had fallen asleep. Who or what guided the car over the unfamiliar road during that time? What caused the blinding light that awoke me? I shall never be sure, but some call Him "luck."

EDDIE VEECH, Decatur H. S., '50
Wilmer Lamar, teacher

What a Future!

As she wearily plodded over to the pencil sharpener with half a dozen dull pencils, she couldn't help thinking how so many of the children's minds matched the pencil points. Yes, it was another one of those days. Things had quieted down since the big fight at recess, and Jack was home "getting repairs" while Tommie stood in the corner. (Some of the parents thought her methods of punishment were old-fashioned, but she thought they were effective.) During the art lesson Louise had spilled paint water all over her dress, and her eyes were still red from crying about it. Little Judy had been excused to go to the "labtree" four times and was getting that gleam in her eye again. Noisy sniffing sounds were coming from Lester's direction in spite of the fact that there was a nice clean handkerchief making his shirt pocket bulge. She was certainly discouraged with her charges.

Then she glanced down at her desk and smiled as she saw Bill's perfect arithmetic paper. The same Bill who once played hookey to escape arithmetic lessons now grinned as he handed in his papers. Those after-school lessons had helped them to under-

stand each other. And there on her desk were the flowers Delores had shyly given her that morning. Delores had more friends now that her teacher had taught her some games and stories to tell the other children. She looked out over the class again and smiled at Jimmy who was staring at her worshipfully. His home life was far from ideal, and school was the only escape from it. She smiled again and sighed as she thought, "It's worth it, I guess. I really—"

* * *

And then Judy will raise her hand and lisp, "Mith Kethler, kin I go to the labtree?" I'll nod to her and start straightening up my desk before the bell rings. Yes, I'm looking forward to life ten years from now. What a future.

MARJORIE KESSLER, Pekin H. S., '50
Bernice W. Falkin, teacher

Thoughts on the Flood

Anyone traveling through our section of the country now—one, that is, who has never seen flooded land—must be amazed at the nature of a flood. The difference between the head water and the back water is so clear cut, to us, anyway, as to arouse the artistic in anyone.

Head water, tumbling down ditches, creeks, rivers, and even down the roads, driven by the driving rain, boiling as if fled from the King of the Underworld, roaring with the voice of doom around trees and bridges, tearing out mammoth trees that have withstood the fury of ages, carrying all of the infinite forms of flotsam down to the sea, is one mood of the flood.

Its calm brother, the back water, is as different as a glass of poison and a tiger. Head water kills like a tiger, swiftly, cruelly, and crudely; while the back water is like the poison, killing slowly, by degrees. It is placid, almost immobile, seemingly without emotions, but it kills just as surely. It kills the trees slowly; it poisons the will and kills by disease. Calm, even though thought pretty, it is the deadlier of the twins. It collects pollution and germs in its quiet depths; it ruins crops completely, not destroying here and there like its twin. Back water drives people from their homes, not head water. Back water ruins towns, not head water. Just as in the case of the tiger and poison, the tiger may be the showier but the poison kills slow but sure.

TOMMY CARROLL, Carmi Twp. H. S., '51
Pauline Harper, teacher

For This I Study English

Why I ever took a course that has me majoring in English is beyond me. How I ever made English 4 is another dark shadow skipping along behind me. English teachers are all right, but every once in a while they get strange ideas and decide that their pupils need to know more about grammar and the different—and difficult—technical terms. I received such an assignment yesterday.

In desperation I decided I might be able to bluff my way through the promised test by cramming that night. So I studied! Until twelve of that technical night, I said to myself, "A gerund is . . . a participle is . . . (I don't see why I have to learn this stuff) a prepositional phrase is . . . (I'll never use it when I leave school) an infinitive is . . . (Adverbs, verbs, clauses, nouns—they all look alike to me)."

After deciding that I knew as much as I ever would—which wasn't very much—I simply dived into bed. Such sweet, restful, quiet sleep! But my sleep wasn't restful and quiet for long. I found myself wandering stupidly around in a beautiful meadow. You think that should be restful? Just wait. I had no more than reached the opposite side of this meadow when my ear drums were split by a sound that would have put an Indian war cry to shame.

Across the star-kissed grass two armies charged each other. General Adverb was leading his host of nouns, verbs, subordinate clauses, antecedents, and conjunctions against General Adjective's battalion. Coming up behind General Adjective were a few singular nouns and a vast number of lower rank adjectives.

When they were in conflict, I couldn't tell Who from Whom, or Whom from What, or Why or When. Prepositional phrase was having a hard time with Independent Clause. Verb was chasing Subject around and Sentence was trying to keep Dangling participle in place. Modifier was making Noun feel small by calling him Pronoun. Gerund was beating Ellipsis with a Past Tense. Interjection, Inflection, Declension, and all forms of To Be were tearing one another apart. And in the midst of the battle was General Adverb, himself, splitting one Infinitive after another.

There seemed to be many punctuation marks in the fight also. I had no idea on which side they were, but they were surely putting up a wonderful battle. Lieutenant Quotation Marks grabbed Corporal Verb, held him still, and then rolled in fiendish laughter when Exclamation Point stabbed him. Question Mark—no rank—hooked his top around his victim and beat him with the period at the end. Poor little Comma didn't seem to be doing very much.

I noticed that he was trying to follow Subordinate Clause. As the picture faded from my view, I saw little Comma struggling in vain to hold two sentences apart.

All that happened last night. Now just one more thing before I turn back to my English assignment. If I ever have another dream like that one, I'm going to beg it to go bother some English teacher who will understand it and to leave me alone.

DOLOROS CHRISTOFFERSON, East H. S., Rockford, '51
Adele Johnson, teacher

Thoughts in Solitude

I am the strangest person. No one knows me, not even myself. Even now, in one of my deepest moods, it is hard to express myself, to tell of these deep thoughts I have.

Sometimes I have the feeling that I will be one of those strange, withdrawn people who have the look in their eyes that they have glimpsed death and can understand it—that they sense things of God's world that other people don't. Maybe I will grow up and write deep, moody books or paint strange pictures of the sea, or of the moor in a windstorm, or of the towers of an ancient weather-beaten castle rising out of the mist. Why is it that people who write or paint such things are moody and strange? Is it because they are the only persons who go so deeply into their thoughts?

Ordinary people who are lighthearted and simple write or paint in a simple, easy-to-understand manner. Children's stories and poems must have been written by this kind of people. *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, and other such books must have been written by those, like myself, who think deeply of life—who, instead of skimming lightly over the surface of life, go slowly, ponderously, always seeking, asking why . . .

When I am among my friends at school or at a ball game, I don't feel these engulfing moods. It is when I am alone and hear weird, beautiful music, or when I am reading a book which tells of God, death, and such things, that I am moved to great emotional heights or depths. There is something in the music, in the words of the book, that gives me a glimpse of the author's mood, and I know what he was trying to say.

Sometimes it is such a happy feeling that I think I shall burst with joy. I want to dance, or to sing, to transfer my joy to others. At other times I am sunk in the deepest despair. I want to go off to some place where it is dark and cold and cry forever. I want to

cry for the world's sorrow—for all that might have been, all the lost loves, destroyed homes.

Such are some of my moods—hard to think out, still harder to express in words. I hope that of those who read this, there will be a few who understand.

DORIS COCHRAN, Gladstone-Oquawka H. S., '51
Velma Marr, teacher

Pass to Victory

Lanky Slat Brannon had those pre-game jitters as he watched the stands bulge with crazy, giggling high school girls; in fact, everyone was yelling deafeningly. The gymnasium was a scene of chaos, and the championship tilt hadn't even started. Slat beamed as he sank a long two-hander from mid-court, and the crowd let fly some more titanic pandemonium.

As the greenclads huddled around Coach Charley Packett for those precious last minute instructions, Slat wondered if Tommy Tallmer was also thinking about the scoring championship—something which meant more to Slat than winning the conference title. Slat noticed that Tom was his usual cool self, apparently not bothered by the significance of this title game with the Denton High Mustangs.

A shrill whistle interrupted Slat's thoughts as the teams left their coaches and took their positions on the court. The crowd, quieted down as if some mighty force had robbed them all of their tongues, were on the edge of their seats waiting the opening of the battle that would decide whether or not Elmwood High would cop its first title in fourteen years.

Tallmer outjumped his opposing pivot man and tipped the ball into Slat's waiting hands. Slat speedily dribbled across the ten second line, faked his guard out of position, and aimed a long two-hander into the waiting rims of the Denton basket. The crowd roared as the Elmwood Tigers in the mere matter of five seconds had a 2-0 lead on the skyscraper cagers from Denton.

As the opponents' guards brought the ball slowly up the court, thoughts of the hectic season passed through Slat's troubled mind—how the now gray-haired coach had been given the alternative by the school board to produce a championship squad or get the bum's rush, how the team had staged an uphill climb to tie for the title with an upset over East High, and how Tallmer and Slat himself had sparked the late season drive with their scoring. A smile

came over his usually serious appearance as he recalled his opening basket, which gave him 161 points, three points more than the lanky Tallmer had scored.

However, the Tigers' lead was short lived as the huge Denton center hooked in a counter to knot the score. Slats hurried down court to assume his offensive forward position. Buz Billings, scrappy Tiger guard, passed to Slats in the far corner, and he pushed the ball into the waiting nets to bring chaos once again into the Elmwood gym.

Elmwood and Slats were hotter than a firecracker on the fourth of July. In rapid-fire action he parted the nets for six more points while Tallmer had yet to find the range. At the end of the first quarter the Tigers owned a commanding 13-7 lead over the boys from Denton. Slats had ten of those thirteen markers as the jubilant Elmwood cagers trotted over to their gray-haired mentor.

Slats watched Tallmer out of the corner of his eye—the big center's handsome face had a look of confidence, not the angry, maddened appearance that Slats had expected. As the sweaty players went out to fill their parched mouths with some water, Tallmer put his hand around Slats' shoulder and said emphatically, "Nice shooting, Slats!"

Brannon was stunned and merely responded in a low guttural tone. Both sides returned to the floor anxious to get at one another. Tallmer once again tipped the melon to Slats, who dribbled into enemy territory and arched the ball towards the net, but it went wide of its mark. However, Tallmer was there, and his huge hand batted the ball into the basket.

The Denton five, sluggish and awed by Slats' sharp-shooting in the first period, suddenly came to life. Slats' man faked him out of position, dribbled underneath the basket, and hooked the ball off the board into the nets. Slats, who was a step behind him, fouled him on the shot, and the Dentonite sank the charity toss.

Now, Slats, over-anxious to steal the ball from the Mustangs, fouled again, and once more the Denton sharpshooter sank the free throw. The Tigers went from hot to cold, and were unable to find the scoring range in contrast to the Mustangs, who fired into the hoop two more baskets to wipe out completely Elmwood's lead and tie up the contest at fifteen all.

The Tigers came out of their momentary lapse, when Tallmer scored a basket on the fast break. Slats fouled again, his fourth personal, and the Mustangs jumped into a 19-18 lead on a one-hander from far out. Tallmer, however, salvaged a one point half-time lead as he sank a two-hander from midcourt as the gun sounded the end of sixteen minutes of hectic play.

Although Coach Packett said a lot in the dressing room, only one sentence stuck in Slat's head.

"Anderson, you start at Brannon's forward position in the third quarter!"

Slat's visions of the scoring championship suddenly vanished in thin air. He envied Tallmer as the teams lined up for the third quarter jump ball. Slat was not at his customary right forward position; instead, he was slumped next to the reserves on the bench.

That single sentence that Tallmer had said to Slat kept running through his worried mind. He glanced at the team's tired and weary looking coach, who nervously played with a key chain. This was the coach who had directed Elmwood's basketball team for fourteen none too prosperous seasons, and who was on the brink of winning a championship or possibly losing his job.

Slat glanced at the gesturing, panicky fans, who lived and died with each basket. He saw, not people, but a small basketball town somewhere in Indiana—sick with basketball fever. He saw not ten players on the court, but two units, each playing for one common cause—honor to their respective schools.

The lead changed hands after practically every basket. Tallmer hooked in a counter to make the score 32-30 in favor of Elmwood. Then it happened—Denton got hot and racked up eight straight points before Elmwood scored on a long two-hander—38-34. Coach Packett motioned to Slat, who was wanting desperately to get into the last five minutes of the game.

The announcer's voice rang forth into the loud speaker "For Elmwood, Brannon, number ten; for Anderson, number six." Time left to play—three minutes and nine seconds."

Tallmer sank his fourteenth point on a free throw as the Tigers trailed by three important points. Everyone in the gymnasium was now on his feet as Elmwood was desperately trying to take the ball away from the stalling Denton quintet.

A strange feeling came over Slat's worried mind. He was almost happy to see Tom score his free throw, even though it gave Tallmer the scoring lead. But Slat wanted that scoring championship for himself, didn't he?

A jump ball and Elmwood had possession of that all important basketball. Slat hurriedly dribbled into the corner. Tallmer was wide open under the basket. Slat saw him, hesitated, and arched the ball into the nets—one point behind with twenty seconds to play!

Slat's mind was all jumbled up, as he realized he now led Tallmer in the all-important scoring race by the margin of one

point. That's what he wanted most of all. He was happy now—only . . .

Desperately, Elmwood pressed all over the court. Slats' man had control of the ball, and with a desperate lunge Slats deflected the ball from the surprised cager's hands. Tallmer raced down court while Slats fought for possession of the melon. The big scoreboard clock told the pleading fans that nine seconds remained between victory and defeat.

Brannon got the ball and dribbled against time down the court. Only one man stood between Slats, Tallmer, and victory. Slats was one step ahead of the opposing guard and ten feet away from the basket. He hesitated only a second, before firing a pass to Tallmer, who rose and dunked the ball into the basket.

Pandemonium, chaos, and frenzy broke loose in the gym; the blast of the gun was only like a pin dropping as the Elmwood team and fans hoisted the jubilant Slats, Tallmer, and Coach Packett on their shoulders and paraded into the streets of that little old Indiana town.

DEAN HANEBUTH, York Comm. H. S., Elmhurst, '50
Eleanor Davis, teacher

A Leaf

A dry brown leaf clung gallantly to its branch while sharp, quick gusts pulled and tugged it this way and that. Throughout the violence of this force the little thing determinedly kept its hold, but in the sudden quiet that followed, as though it were worn out by the effort it had exerted, it relinquished its hold and circled, spinning laboriously, to the ground.

Frightened and embarrassed in this new world, it blushed a deep scarlet and curled up into itself, cringing from the careless footsteps of the passers-by; but autumn would not let it rest. A giant puff of wind whisked it up, twirling it over its old home and far above the roof-tops. Bowing, scraping, pirouetting, it sang its swan song to summer. It danced its way over the city, dipping and bobbing, sometimes floating, oftener rushing headlong at some invisible adversary, until, suddenly breathless and dizzy, it sank gracefully to earth for the last time.

As the rays of the sun shone down upon it, the little thing seemed to dry out and unfold, thin and fragile and helpless, until all at once a wave of motion touched it and it lay there in jagged pieces.

SANDRA DICUS, Evanston Twp. H. S.
Mary Taft, teacher

The Sentinel

All that I am aware of as I stand on this windswept rock is the scene before me. A rich valley is blanketed with luxuriant foliage. My senses are sharpened. Tranquil chords rise and fall as if an unseen being is putting this inspiring setting into an ecstasy of music. The tempo increases until my whole being is violently beating. The music fades away into the distance with an echo like a throbbing tom-tom. It appears before me like a dawn, the beginning, the creation. As I travel through the dimensions of time, I see the valley as it once was. Soon the distant winding footpath carries a band of red warriors on the hunt. Wild beasts travel this path to the happy valley, hunting food. Now out of the dimness, travel men, strange men. Their skin is white and they lust for gold. The drums still beat, throbbing, throbbing, until the valley whirls and whirls. As my brain clears, all that I hear is the mournful chant of women. The ground is deeply stained with blood. Before my eyes eons have passed, the snow has danced, spring has risen out of winter's bosom, summer has mellowed to fall, the leaves have drifted from the trees. My eyes have seen this, but to pour out this beauty in word or song, I can not. My branches and trunk, gnarled by beating snows and raging winds, hold this story. From silence I have come, and to silence I will go.

ROBERT HORN, East H. S., Rockford, '53
Adele Johnson, teacher

HONORABLE MENTION

- Bloomington: "Static from the Past," by Roger Hufford (Lorraine Kraft); "Willie Weekin," by Eula Mae Quick (Lorraine Kraft); "The Silent Love," by Joyce Shea (Effie Sutton).
Bushnell: "The Hunter," by Dwain Berggren (Adele Armstrong).
Carmi: "Leaders of Tomorrow," by Bob Hays (Pauline Harper); "Christmas," by Janet Aykens (Beatrice Dean).
Collinsville: "First Aid for You," by Shirley Elmore (Lucille Miller).
Crystal Lake: "How to Wash Dishes," by Adrienne McMullin (Marjorie Raglin); "Benvenuto Cellini," by Lee Dalrymple (Patricia Harker).
East Rockford: "On Entertaining Guests," by Francis Twait (Adele Johnson).

- Elgin: "From the Family Album," by Claudette Seymour (Gertrude Meadows).
- Evanston: "Bewildered Bodycombes," by Mary Nolan (Clarence Hach); "Grover Wadsworth," by Jim Folsom (Mary L. Taft); "One Snug, the Joiner," by Robert McFerran (Edith Lackey); "Silent, Upon a Peak," by Jean Galloway (M. Wright).
- Geneseo: "Starshine," by Janet Klavohn (Helen Madden).
- Holy Family (Chicago): "How the Squirrel Got Its Tail," by Thelma Grabowska (Sister Mary Lauretana).
- Joliet: "Peace on Earth," by Nancy Edmunds (Mary Ryan); "The Last Ride," by John W. Harris (Philenia Clark).
- Lake Forest: "Concerto," by Judith Corbett (Robert Haebich); "Rendezvous," by Betty Burkill (Robert Haebich).
- Maine (Park Ridge): "The Split Second," by Richard Siggins (Elizabeth Paroline); "I Speak for Democracy," by Marjorie Dixon (Paulene Yates); "The World's Greatest Side-show," by Larry Fox (Paulene Yates); "Pity the Poor Caddy" and "Shall Yourselves Find Blessing," by David Carl (Paulene Yates); "I Speak for Democracy," "Buried Treasure," and "Home of Midget Mousers," by Lois Heimsoth (Paulene Yates); "Flush," by Paula Gibbs (Paulene Yates); "Spring Adventure," by Jane Meyer (Anne Lauterbach); "Itches," by Mary Kelsey (Anna Lauterbach).
- Naperville: "An Up-to-Date Version of *Treasure Island*," by Elaine Keller (Laura Wolverton); "A Night without Electricity," by Donald Alford (Laura Wolverton); "Wash Day," by Kathryn Smith (Laura Wolverton).
- Niles (Skokie): "Big Stuff," by Jack Ravent (Doris Tillmann).
- Paris: "Democracy vs. Communism," by Frank Minton (Addie Hochstrasser).
- Reed-Custer (Braidwood): "Cincinnati Dancing Pig," by Elena Bergman (Vera C. Smith).
- Sacred Heart (Chicago): "The Story of Fluff," by Rosemary Leamel (Sister M. Andrea).
- Visitation (Chicago): "Snow," by Joan Subr.
- West Frankfort: "The House that John Built," by Dexter Peak (Velma Nave).
- York (Elmhurst): "Misplaced Person," by Joyce Stroman (Eleanor Davis); "The Height of the Matter," by Joanne Wingert (Eleanor Davis); "The Heisman Trophy," by Don Manson (Eleanor Davis); "Wishing Isn't Enough," by Donna Bainer (Eleanor Davis).

DEC 10 1951

NOTE TO MEMBERS

If you did not receive your copy of the October, November, December, or January issue, please notify the editor.